

Commission Quarterly

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April 2004

Spring Issue

Awards Program Weaves Color and Content

The Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission, along with Friends of the Commission, hosted its 28th annual event awards luncheon in recognition of International Women's Day to celebrate "Weaving *Women's Voices*" The March 5th event was held at the Cornhusker Hotel, 333 South 13th Street., Lincoln, Neb. Mayor Coleen J. Seng was keynote speaker. The Women's Commission presented its annual award to four outstanding citizens.

The **Alice Paul Award** was presented to a woman whose life's work reflects her dedication to the struggle for women's equality. **Dr. Gerise Herndon**, an associate professor of

English and director of Women's Studies at Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU), promotes education, awareness and change through her contact with students, staff and the community at large. Working through leadership opportunities, her teaching methods and volunteer activities with a variety of community organizations have left a positive impact on many individuals. Her feminist perspective is not separated into distinct compartments, but encompasses all facets of her professional and personal life. Gerise has been instrumental in creating growth and expansion within the Women's Studies program. This is attributed to her efforts and her vision, coupled with careful attention to curriculum development, recruitment and day-to-day administrative and program assessments. Gerise's involvement at NWU included working on the Women's Commission, serving as a member of the President's Council on Diversity, Personal Harassment Resource Person, and serving as local chapter president of the American Association of University Professors. Her local involvement has included volunteering to staff the Rape Spouse Abuse Crisis Center hotline, serving as board member on the University Place Community Organization and on the Northeast Family Resource Center board. Internationally speaking, she is a member of the National Women's Studies Association and participated in several workshops held in Costa Rica, West Africa and Cuba. Gerise is deeply committed to equity issues, outspoken on issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation, and pay equity. Gerise is a tireless worker for issues of inclusiveness and tolerance. She has made her classrooms a laboratory for pluralism, creating class work that teaches about such issues as gender and racial discrimination and empowerment.

The **Erasmus Correll Award** was presented to a man who has exhibited outstanding commitment through his individual leadership and community involvement to the issues affecting women and has encouraged and supported women in their pursuit of equal status and an enhanced quality of life. **Rev. Lauren D. Ekdahl**,

who has served as pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church for the past 13 years, has kept his commitment to improve the quality of life for women in the community. His first assignment as a young theology student was to work on the Role and Status of Women Commission during the early 70's. This experience grounded him well in understanding women's issues. Married to Shirley and father of three daughters, Rev. Ekdahl has been involved and participated in a wide variety of women-oriented activities from coaching a girl's softball team to teaching classes on aging sponsored by the United Methodist Women. Through his personal and professional endeavors, he is known to be a man sensitive to diversity and inclusiveness. Whether its working one-on-one with a parishioner making a tough life decision, taking a public stand in a letter to the editor, or leading a Legislative Day workshop for Church Women United., Rev. Ekdahl follows what he believes to be the moral path - even when it's not socially popular. He has worked many years on women's reproductive rights and other health issues, served on Gov. Exon's State Health Coordinating Council, and held many community leadership positions on boards such as Lincoln Interfaith Council, Nebraska Rural Health Association, Planned Parenthood of Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, Amnesty International, Nebraskans for Peace, Methodist Federal for Social Action and Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska Health Concerns Committee. Rev. Ekdahl demonstrated his support for women and their issues at a time when few men had the courage to publicly advocate equality for women and promote change.

The **Woman Artist - Performing Arts Award** was presented to a local woman artist



who excels in her work as deemed by peers and colleagues, and to support the arts in the community. **Judith K. Hart** excels as a performer, director, teacher and role model in the art of performance. She is the co-founder and executive director of the Angels Theatre Company, a Lincoln performance group of professional actors, designers, directors, writers, visual artists, musicians, and dancers who collaborate to create. The company's mission is to provide opportunities for Lincoln talent, to nurture original works, to promote and encourage professional artistic growth and to allow members access to a community of supportive mentors. Judith also serves as a contact for new artists in town, and helps them find ways to explore and perform their own art. She has directed 11 theater productions, acted in 27 plays, worked in seven film and television performances including Walt Disney Productions, Union Pacific and Godfather's Pizza, and has taught at Doane College, the Rensselaerville

Institute, Arts Are Basic Aesthetic Institute and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Currently, she is instrumental in directing *The Vagina Monologues* to help raise money for Fresh Start Home and Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center.

Judith's work with students and the community at large has led them to use drama as a learning vehicle for examining complex social issues, learning about other cultures and lifestyles, and promoting artistic growth within the community.

The **Young Feminist Award** was presented to a young woman, through actions or by example, attempts to enhance the quality of life for girls or women at school, home, place of worship or in the community. **Miss Sarah L. Mason**, a Lincoln Southeast High School senior, is described as a self-motivated and dynamic young woman who is dedicated to equality. The daughter of Sally and Tom Mason, Sarah has donated countless hours of volunteer time to in an effort to educate her peers, making their world a safer place to live. She has given a great deal of time to school, church and community groups while maintaining excellent grades and participating in theater and music. Sarah is a good role model, well liked by other students and admired by the faculty. Sarah helped with the coordination of the Students for Peace Benefit Night last May. The proceeds for that event, which was a talent show of student acts, went to the International Heifer Project loan organization that seeks to provide those living in poverty with livestock, teaching them how to provide for themselves and their families. As a testament to her willingness to teach others about women's issues, Sarah personally took on the task of getting a group of high school volunteers to canvas a neighborhood in the Safe Quarters campaign for Friendship Home. As an officer of the Psychology Club at Southeast, she is now putting together activities for Mental Health Awareness Week in April. Sarah has also volunteered helping with the Families and School Together (FAST) program in conjunction with one of Lincoln's Community Learning Centers. She is part of the planning team of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ Youth Council, planning a spring event to discuss domestic violence and to educate young women about abusive relationships. She has also been part of Teen Court, a community group that distributes information on initiatives such as "Try Another Way," a gender specific program that educates young women about relationships. ■



Karen Dienstbier escorts immigrant Sudanese women from the Lincoln Literacy Council to the International Women's Day awards program activities.



Rev. Lauren D. Ekdahl, 2004 Erasmus Correll Award recipient



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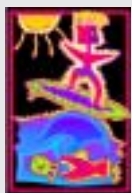
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The ranks of women holding top-level jobs in state government is changing at "glacial" speed, says Judith Sidel, director of a study on the subject for the University of Albany (N.Y.) Center for Women in Government and Civil Society. One finding: The percentage of women in governor-appointed positions - such as chiefs of staff and cabinet agencies - rose from 29.8 percent in 1999 to 35 percent in 2001, but has slid back to 32 percent today. Only three of the eight states with female governors - Delaware, Kansas, and Michigan - are above average in hiring women to set policy. The top 10 states, according to the study, and the percentage of key positions held by women in each last year:

1. Massachusetts 50.0%
 2. Oregon 47.8
 3. Florida 44.8
 4. Iowa 43.1
 5. Missouri 42.9
 6. Kansas 39.3
 7. Wisconsin 37.8
 8. Virginia 37.5
 9. Nebraska 36.8
 10. Tennessee 37.1
- Associated Press

March's taping of **WomenTalk** will focus on "She Serves Too: Women in the Military," with Senior Master Sergeant Kathy Claypool, Senior Sergeant Melissa Berling, Annette McRoy and Commissioner Holly Burns.



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www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/mayor/women/

Commission News

Welcome New LLWC Commissioners

Jeannine Falter is employed by Duncan Aviation and works as vice president of



Jeannine Falter

Business Development. She leads an active community and volunteer life, working with such boards as the Cather Circle at the University of Nebraska Mentor Program, Institute for Career Advancement Needs

(ICAN), Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Society of Aeronautical Engineers, National Business Aircraft Association, National Council of Family Relations and the Nebraska Art Association.

Barbara Ramsey, Ph. D., is employed at the Lincoln Regional Center and works as its chief executive officer for the Department of Health and Human Services. Her community and volunteer involvement includes such activities as working with the Nebraska Hospice Association, Southwood Church, Nebraska Alcoholism Council and the Lincoln Symphony Guild.



Barbara Ramsey

Bethina Moore is employed at the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln and works as a project assistant in the Office of the President. She has performed volunteer work on a wide variety of community organizations and



Bethina Moore

Hazard Pay for Grandmas?

In child care emergencies, grandmothers are often the first line of defense. But pitching in to help with the baby-sitting may be taking a toll on Grandma's health. According to an ongoing survey of 55,000 registered nurses, grandmothers who provide child-care for nine hours or more a week have a 55% higher risk of having a heart attack. The study did not try to determine why, but stress may be a factor. It may also be that grandmothers with heavy child-care demands have less time to practice good health habits. So Grandma may need - and want - to help take care of the kids, but she must also take care of herself.

Facts, Women & Retirement

There are more than 6.5 million older person living alone and 77 percent of those are women. Unfortunately, 45 percent of older women are living in poverty. At the current rate of Baby Boomers blooming, this total will be 13.3 million by 2020, of which 85 percent will be women. For 25 percent of elderly non-married women (widowed, divorced, separated, or never married), Social Security is their only source of income. Without Social Security benefits, the elderly poverty rate among women would be 52.2 percent and among widows would be 61 percent. In 2000, 12.2 percent of women over 65 were living in poverty. Widowhood severely jeopardizes a woman's economic prospects. Elderly widows received on an average of \$5,964 a year in Social Security benefits as compared to an average of \$14,580 for the joint Social Security benefit received by a married couple.

boards, including Self-Esteem & Higher Education Equal Empowerment (SHE) conference, Friendship Home, Diversity Partnership Committee, UNL Equity Gender Committee, Malone Community Center and the State Employees Achieving Racial and Cultural Harmony.



Danja Pegram Siders

Danja Pegram-Siders is employed by Ag Invest, LLC., as a property and real estate farm manager. She has served as United Way Campaign manager, Red Cross Appreciation Committee, Mad Dads Board of Directors, Pheasants Forever Board volunteer, Duncan Aviation and Rotoract.

Jeri L. Brandt, Ph. D., is employed as associate professor of Nursing and Department Chair at Nebraska Wesleyan University. She pulls volunteer time for BryanLGH Medical Center and Health Lincoln case manager. She has been active on Tabitha Home health Advisory Board, Hospice of Nebraska Foundation Board, Geriatric-Psych nurse consultant, English as Second Language tutor for the Lincoln Literacy Council, Red Cross Disaster Nurse, and math/Science Network of Nebraska.



Jeri L. Brandt

Beth Rodacker is employed at Union College as an associate English professor. She is a board member of PALS, a local nonprofit animal organization; serves on the board of directors for the Lincoln Chapter of the National Organization for



Beth Rodacker

Women, and is a co-leader for the Neighborhood Watch program.

You're Commission at Work & Play!

Ever wonder what's happening "behind the scenes" at the Women's Commission? Here's a small sampling of projects and programs LLWC has engaged this quarter:

- Implemented the Women's Leadership Board Recruitment program to balance gender inequities by matching women to openings on boards, commissions and task forces.
- Cosponsored "The Color of Money" workshop for women of color. Presented by the national OWL organization, topics covered long-term financial investments and retirement funds.
- Cosponsoring two workshops for nursing mothers returning to the work force and/or school environment with the committee, Breastfeeding Group: Healthy Kids 2010.
- Working with volunteer translators to create a health care brochure targeting non-English speaking women of color that encourages them to contact their health care providers and seek quality services.
- Cosponsoring a League of Women Voters Candidate's Forum on April 5 at Cedars-Northbridge Center.
- Cosponsoring a Candidate's Political Forum on April 15 at the Malone Community Center.
- Creating a new networking program for women of influence called "The Council of Women Leaders," holding its inaugural dinner on April 20 at Valentino's Restaurant, 33rd & Holdrege Sts.
- Participant with the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau as a contact point for GEM Nursing, a mentoring program that matches students with professionals in the nursing industry.
- Participant with the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau "Wise Up" program, an on-line mentoring project for women teaching topics on financial issues and literacy.
- Participant in "Celebration of the Young Child" with The Early Care & Education Group of the Community Services Initiative, an informational program focusing on children's developmental milestones.
- Women Vote advertising campaign, appearing in the Waverly and Hickman newspapers, for rural women living in Lancaster County, encouraging them to get to the polls.

Save The Date!

The second annual Women & Money Conference is scheduled for Friday, **September 24, 2004**, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center in Lincoln, NE.

There will be featured keynote speakers, lunch, exhibitors and educational workshops to discuss issues from balancing your checkbook to investing for your future. This event is sponsored by **The Lincoln Agency and the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission**. Call the Lincoln Agency for more information at 484-6167, or email inquiries to: info@womenandmoneyconference.com



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LLWC President's Letter

A New Approach to Women-Significant Issues

Having served on the Lincoln/Lancaster Women's Commission for over three years I have had the pleasure of working with commissioners and staff on a variety of issues and projects. Early in my tenure I was happy to volunteer at events such as the annual dinner and "Take Your Daughter to Work Day." I hoped, however, that the Commission would consider becoming involved and taking action on issues that really had an impact on the quality of life of women in our community. This sentiment was held by the rest of the Commissioners as well, and we agreed, with staff, to participate in a long-range strategic planning effort to prioritize our goals and develop action steps to guide where we would put our resources in the future.



Nancy Intermill

After several arduous sessions, fearlessly led by Kit Boesch, and multiple homework assignments, we came to consensus on two major areas of focus: 1) women and health, and 2) women's leadership in our community. We brainstormed possible action steps, debated their merits, and decided on a path to follow. Prior to that, however, we firmly agreed that we wanted to see specific, measurable, changes in the lives of Lincoln women, and that doing that would require us working on long-range, systemic, community change. Realizing that we couldn't do "everything," we quickly reached the conclusion that some activities would need to be deferred, in order to free up the time of staff and volunteers to work on longer-range projects.

Therefore, you might have noticed that the Commission has changed its focus to become a catalyst in community affairs that strive to improve and inspire women to reach new heights in their quality of living. The Commissioners continue to tackle those issues of great importance to women, evaluating resources (time and energy) and determining a direction of action while looking through the lens of our strategic planning goals. Activities which don't fit in our strategic goals are referred to other groups more prepared to address them. There is, as we know, plenty of work for all of us!

This will be my last president's column, and I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to you, our supporters, Friends of the Commission, and my sister Commissioners for all of your hard work this year. We distributed the *Place at the Table* report which demonstrated that the various bodies of the governmental, profit and non-profit companies located in Lincoln, Nebraska, are comprised of roughly 25 percent women, despite the fact that women comprise 51 percent of the population in our city and county. These findings reinforce the importance of putting women into leadership positions in our community. We now have a talent bank that seeks to "match" organizations that are seeking women's input with individuals who have a desire to serve. Responding to women's concern about pro-active health care, we also produced resource brochures and tapes encouraging women of color and immigrant women to seek out good health care services, and tips on how to communicate better with their health care providers.

None of this could have happened, however, without the creative and conscientious staff (of three!) who make the Commissioners' ideas come to fruition. Diane, Karen, and Bonnie, thank you for the fabulous work that you do. It has been a pleasure working with all of you to promote systemic changes on behalf of the women of Lincoln and Lancaster County!

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females beings when the doctor says, 'It's a girl!'." -- Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

Patients Should Fear Heart Disease Over Breast Cancer

Women who experience unexplained fatigue and sleeplessness may be having early warning signs of a heart attack, a study suggests. The Study, published Monday in the American Heart Association journal Circulation, surveyed 515 women who had heart attacks and found that 95% had such symptoms as much as a month before they were stricken.

Chest pains can be an early indicator of a heart attack, but 43% of the women in the study said they never experienced chest discomfort.


The study marks the first time researchers

have identified fatigue and sleeplessness as possible early warning signs in women. The researchers say they do not know whether the findings also apply to men, who tend to have somewhat different symptoms when a heart attack strikes. The study shows the need to education patients and doctors about early warning signs, says researcher Jean McSweeney of the University of Arkansas for Medical Science in Little Rock.

Heart disease is the number one killer of women, yet women are more afraid of breast cancer. They don't realize heart disease is what they need to fear more, she said.

THANK YOU INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DONORS LLWC 28th Annual Awards Program Sponsors:

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July 2003 Summer Issue



Located within the city's "Interline" web site system, the Women's Alliance (LLWA) directory offers a wide variety of information on individual clubs and organizations, including the contact information. If your organization or agency would like to post information free of charge or update its current information, an application can be obtained from the web site's index page (www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/mayor/women/llwa) or call 441-7716 and one will be snail-mailed to you.

If you are looking for a way to become actively involved in the community, make new friends or strengthen networks, look in the listings for great connections!

This community service is sponsored by Friends of LLWC and the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission.

Mission Statement



Working as a division of the Mayor's Office since 1976, the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission works to assure that the women of Lincoln & Lancaster County have full participation in the issues that have an impact on their lives. The Commission advises City and County officials of social, economic and legal barriers that prevent women from choosing their roles in the family, the labor force and society in general, and working toward the elimination of those barriers. With 15 volunteers and a paid staff of three, the Commission continues to engage in activities designed to heighten community awareness in the areas of self-sufficiency, health care, safety, education and act as a clearinghouse of information for women in need.

Commission Quarterly Newsletter

The Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission (LLWC) is an Advisory Board created by elected officials to advise the Mayor, Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board on issues that impact women. Please address any correspondence to: Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission, 440 S. 8th St., Ste. 100, Lincoln NE 68508-2294 or call (402) 441-7717.

Editorial Policy:

The Commission Quarterly is a publication of Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission. Publishing costs are paid by Friends. Materials appearing in this publication shall be in accordance with the purposes, goals and official positions of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission and Friends of the Women's Commission. The Commission Quarterly is published four times a year: January, April, July and October.

Criteria for Publication:

Submission by community groups and individuals are welcome. Deadlines are the first of the month preceding the month of publication. Articles are subject to editing, with the author's compliance. Specific opinions expressed are not necessarily the opinions held by LLWC employees, its Commissioners or Friends of the Women's Commission.

Advertising

Advertising is available in a business card sized ad and will be accepted as space is available on a first come, first serve basis. All ads should be camera ready and must be submitted one month before the publication date. For more information on advertising opportunities, call 441-7717.

Friends of the Commission

Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission is a 501 (c)(3) organization that solicits funds for the commission's projects.

LLWC Staff

Karen Wamsley, office specialist; Diane Mullins, public information specialist, and Bonnie Coffey, director.

Friends Executive Board

Karen Dienstbier, president; Roberta Stick, vice president; Georgia Glass, treasurer; Nan Schweiger, secretary, and Marcia Kushner, immediate past president.

CQ Committee

Bonnie Coffey and Diane Mullins.

LLWC Commissioners

Jeri Brandt, Holly Burns, vice-president; Bridget Christensen, member-at-large; Dr. Gwendolyn M. Combs, Jeannine Falter, Jennifer Gutierrez, Nancy Intermill, president; Bethina Moore, Colleen Ozanne, Barbara Ramsey, Beth Rodacker, Danja Siders, Nicole Simon, Roberta Stick, and Kathleen Uhrmacher, member-at-large.

**BUSINESS FACT OF THE WEEK**

The desire for independence is a key motivating factor for women business owners when starting a business. In fact, when asked, 45% said they were motivated by independence.

Seizing the Opportunities: A Report on the Forces Propelling the Growth of Women-Owned Enterprises underwritten by Wells Fargo, June 2003



Mayor Colleen J. Seng presents Southeast High School student, Sarah Mason, with the 2004 Young Feminist Award for her ongoing work in promoting women's equality at school and in the community.



Celebrating International Women's Day brought together diversity in color and cloth. From left, Peggy Newquist and Khamisa Abdalla share a moment in time.



Commissioner Gwen Combs (far right) joins other women of color in the fun at the Women's Commission International Women's Day: Weaving Women's Voices awards luncheon held in March at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, NE.

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Commission Quarterly

Business and the Working Woman

Payroll Taxes Start Running Short in 2018

(WOMENSENEWS) - In its annual report, the Social Security board of trustees, which oversees the trust fund of the program, showed little change over the past year in projections about when the trust fund reserves are expected to run out. Tax revenues are projected to fall below program costs in 2018 and funds to run out in 2042.

The report also shows that the trustees' projection of the size of Social Security's 75-year financing shortfall—measured both as a percentage of payrolls and as a percentage of the economy—has decreased very slightly from the projection of a year ago. Over the 75-year period, the trust funds require additional revenue equivalent to \$3.7 trillion in today's dollars to pay all scheduled benefits. This unfunded obligation grew \$200 billion from last year.

In a separate report, Medicare trustees said the public health insurance program for the elderly had deteriorated significantly due in part to rising health costs and a new Medicare law. The forecast is particularly troubling for women who, because of statistically longer life expectancies, depend more than men on Medicare payments.

That's the choice that many women's groups see in current funding debates over Social Security and Medicare, the public health insurance program for the nation's elderly.

No surprise, they choose Social Security and Medicare, and say that an annual report published in March 2004 from the trustees of both programs only strengthen the case against tax cuts.

"Instead of trying to scare the American people into believing Social Security and Medicare are unstable programs on the verge of collapse, we should focus on the disastrous effects of making tax-cuts permanent," says Laurie Young, executive director of the Older Women's League, a Washington, D.C., advocacy group. "If the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 are made permanent, the loss in revenue over the next 75 years will be approximately the same as the projected shortfalls in Social Security and Medicare."

"The real concern for women is that older women have fewer resources," says Young. "And, the older they get, the more costs there are associated with health care, the more they have to spend on out-of-pocket expenses and the less likely they are to get the kind of care they need, because they have to make difficult choices."

The reports come amid widely publicized concerns that the Social Security system will run out of money as the baby boom generation begins hitting retirement age in 2011. Such fears of a potential insolvency have prompted various groups, as well as the Bush administration, to push changes to the current Social Security system, including partial privatization through the creation of self-managed retirement accounts.

In February, Federal Reserve Board Chair Alan Greenspan heated up the debate by urging Congress to cut future benefits in Social Security and Medicare to ensure tax cuts remain permanent at a time of rising budget deficits. Many women's groups have since been striking back, arguing that tax cuts enacted in recent years will, if made permanent, substantially increase long-term budget deficits, reward higher-income people and make it more difficult to find resources to transfer to Social Security as part of solvency plans.

"The federal government is already tapping every penny of the extra payroll taxes going into the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for tax cuts that primarily benefit the wealthiest Americans and to keep the government running," says Joan Entmacher, vice president and director of Family Economic Security at the National Women's Law Center. Proponents of private Social Security accounts—in which workers would be able to individually invest their Social Security contributions—are seeing no reason to view the situation as less of a crisis.

"The unfunded liability, in present value terms, went up about \$200 billion last year, so we have lost another year of solvency in the Social Security system," says Michael Tanner,

Get your FREE LLWC bumper sticker - "Women Vote!"

WomenTalk Focuses on Quality Childcare Choices

The May program of WomenTalk will be devoted to discussing one of the most important topics for working mothers, "Choices for Children: Choosing Quality Providers." With so many women in the workforce, child care is first on the list in making important family decisions.

How do we decide which child care facility to use? Who can we trust to take care of our children? What types of care are available? What happens to my child after I leave for work? Selecting the right provider for your family is an important task in obtaining quality care. Watch WomenTalk in May and June to learn more about finding quality care.

director of the Cato Institute's Project on Social Security Choice. Furthermore, tax cuts are cuts in general revenue taxes and are not used to fund Social Security. General revenues could be used to fill in the future gaps, but views other reforms as preferable.

Women's groups agree that changes are needed to ensure the long-term viability of both Medicare and Social Security. But most oppose any kind of privatization to a system they say largely supports elderly and low-income women. Privatization would subject Social Security benefits to market risk and would be difficult for people with few resources and little or no investing experience or education to manage.

LLWC Forms New Network Group, Council of Women Leaders

It's no secret that Lincoln and Lancaster County are growing at warp speed, providing our community with a rich tapestry of cultures, lifestyles, customs and causes. With women representing 51% of the population in Lincoln, that growing community includes a large number of women who are leaders in their cultural communities, in their careers, in their faith communities, in their neighborhoods, in their clubs and organizations.

But how do we all connect to support and learn from one another? The Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission has created a specific networking group called, The Council of Women Leaders.

The Council of Women Leaders will meet twice a year, informally, to provide a venue to meet other women we may not otherwise have an opportunity to meet in our schedules. Our first event will feature speaker Mayor Coleen J. Seng to provide a context for our efforts.

We invite you to join us in an event that provides a unique opportunity to meet women from across our community who are leaders, women who may not have the title of "president" in an organization, but who may yield great influence in their neighborhoods. We're looking to connect with women "movers and shakers", women who are recognized leaders either formally or informally in an effort to learn from one another and to strengthen each other's efforts.

We hope you'll come help us strengthen the community of women in Lincoln and Lancaster County on Tuesday, April 20, 2004 beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the downstairs conference room at Valentino's on 3455 Holdrege St., Lincoln, NE. The buffet dinner will provide a large variety of diet options, and includes beverage, tax and gratuity. Reservations can be made by calling the LLWC office at 441-7717.

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